The Smell of the White Man Is Killing Us: Education and Assimilation Among Indigenous Peoples*

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Introduction

A cursory glance at Euro-colonial encounters clearly illustrates the close connection between assimilating indigenous peoples[1] and educating them. In North America the Spanish, French, and English all carried similar attitudes about the "savagery" and "barbarism" of the indigenous peoples and believed that the twin engines of Christianization and education would produce a people more palatable to European sensibilities. In the case of Australia, the colonizers transplanted attitudes and ideas about indigenous peoples and benefited from the English experience in other parts of the empire. There exists a wide array of scholarly works on colonization and colonialism, yet only a handful of scholars have focused on the importance of institutions, namely boarding schools, in realizing the economic and philosophical goals of the dominant colonizing powers. Moreover, much of the scholarship considers a single area or cultural group and does not utilize transnational comparisons.[2]

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1. Throughout the term "indigenous" will be used to refer to those cultures and peoples who were present in North American and Australia at the point of colonization. A multitude of terms are used to describe these people—Aboriginal, Native, First Nation, Indian, as well as specific names of cultural groupings—and reliance on a single term reduces unnecessary confusion and constantly changing nomenclature.

2. For several recent works that touch upon the intersection of race and Christian education see Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain?: A Question of Genocide in Australia's History* (Ringwood, Victoria: Viking Press, 2001); Judith Simon (ed.), *Nga Kura Maori: The Native School System, 1867-1969* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998); James Carroll, "A Beacon of Indian Education: Fort Totten, North Dakota," Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, forthcoming; and Mary Ellen Kelm, "A Scandalous Procession: Residential Schooling and the Re/formation of Aboriginal Bodies, 1900-1950," *Native Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (1996): 51-88.

The value and future importance of transnational history was highlighted in a series of summer conferences convened in Florence, Italy, between 1997-2000 that brought together an international array of scholars to discuss theories and practical applications of globalizing American history. The intellectual product of these deliberations was "The LaPietra Report: A Report to the Profession" which was endorsed by the Organization of American Historians and provided a number of recommendations and directives for U.S. historians. The report advocated the blurring of fixed national boundaries, using a cross-cultural approach in teaching and research, and incorporating a wider range of historical narratives into the scholarly discussion of events. The challenges presented have resonated with scholars of indigenous peoples in North America for over two decades due to the complex intersection of colonial powers, tribal cultures, and linguistic groups that affect indigenous history in North America. The comparisons between Canada and the United States, and to a lesser extent Mexico, are obvious to scholars in the field. To extend these comparisons to a wider geographic scope and to a larger sampling of indigenous cultures, however, requires a broad command of national histories, theory (post-modern, post-colonial, and post-structuralist), imperialism, and indigenous history, to name a few.[3]

The task of comparing (and by its very nature contrasting) indigenous boarding schools in the United States and Australia require new modes of thinking about research and a very clear theoretical structure. The process of comparing two societies, albeit quite similar in some respects, and their approaches to indigenous education requires understanding differing definitions and goals of assimilation, considering different notions of race and racism vis-à-vis indigenous peoples, interpreting government policies affecting indigenous people, and determining the cultural value that each nation places on education as a "civilizing" agent. The scholarly and theoretical challenges involved in this study are significant, yet the robust intellectual discourse that will emerge makes the effort worthwhile and enriching.[4] In addition, as Richard Slatta recently noted, "to limit the subject of historical inquiry within national boundaries is always to invite the charge of narrow perspective and historical nationalism."[5] The comparison of indigenous boarding schools provides an appropriate venue and opportunity to generate meaningful transnational comparisons.

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3. See James T. Carroll, "Indigenous Education: Transnational and Parallel 'Middle Grounds," Proceedings, American Catholic Historical Association Meeting, Miami, Florida, April 16, 2004 for a complete discussion of the implications of the LaPietra Report as well as the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

4. See Augie Fleras and Jean Elliott, *The Nations Within: Aboriginal- State Relations in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992); Andrew Armitage, *Comparing the Policy of Aboriginal Assimilation: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995); Roger Nichols, *Indians in the United States and Canada: A Comparative Approach* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); and Paul Havemann (ed.), *Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999) for good examples of the value of comparative history and indigenous peoples.

5. Richard Slatta, "The Whys and Wherefores of Comparative Frontier History," *Journal of the West* 42, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 9.

In order to identify the points of comparison between mission schools in the United States and Australia, a group of questions will focus and clarify the analysis. While the role of education in the process of cultural assimilation raises a wide range of important issues, this essay will consider five points: (1) "How was the philosophy of indigenous schools affected by prevailing notions of race and ethnicity in the United States and Australia?" (2) "What role did the forces of "Anglo-conformity"—christianization, cultivation, and civilization—play in school curriculums and the aspirations for assimilation?" (3) "How did the various religious denominations assist in forcible assimilation?" (4) "How did indigenous students respond to the assimilationist efforts in the schools?" and (5) "How did the indigenous student population interpret the boarding school experience and to what extent did they preserve their traditional cultures?"

The response to these questions will be organized in five broad areas of discussion. First, some comments on the rationale for using Australia and the United States as a case study on indigenous education. The historic parallels between the two places are obvious—colonizing and expanding population base, Christian ethos, white domination, forcible removal and land hunger, and the prominence of market forces in national development—however, there are some clear differences—the legal status of aboriginal peoples, ideas on race, and goals for education. Second, a brief overview of racial and assimilationist theories in the United States and Australia from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth centuries provides a context for comparison. Third, and most important, what role did boarding schools play in assimilating and homogenizing indigenous peoples and how did both governments assist in this process. Finally, a critical review of the similarities and differences between Australia and the United States will generate important findings and areas of future research. The chronological focus is 1900-1950; the earlier date marks a period of intense efforts on the part of both governments and a multitude of religious denominations to build schools for purposes of assimilation, the closing year represents a movement away from institutional forms of education among indigenous children. The geographic parameters will include indigenous boarding schools in Western Australia and North and South Dakota in the United States. Both regions had a significant indigenous population, shared common characteristics of a frontier society, and experienced an in-migration of white-settlers at the turn of the century.

Comparative History: Australia and the United States—A Case Study

The cultural and historic connections between Australia and the United States have been consistently affirmed. Two seemingly divergent voices separated by over fifty years made salient references to this cohesion—Mark Twain, the nineteenth-century American writer, and Robert Menzies, the illustrious prime minister of Australia in the mid-twentieth century. In *Following the Equator* (1897), Twain opined that "the Australians did not seem to me to differ noticeably from Americans, either in dress, car-

riages, ways, pronunciation, inflections, or general appearance." In 1950 Prime Minister Menzies appeared before the United States House of Representatives and reported that "the truth is that when we Australians think about other people of the world we think of some of them as foreigners and some of them, as not. I want to tell you at once, that, except in the jaundiced eyes of the law, Americans are not foreigners in Australia."[6] While charges of overstating a case and inflicting hyperbole may be leveled against both these statements, it is my contention that Australians and Americans shared more in common with each other than they did with their growing indigenous populations and that over the course of the first five decades of the twentieth century their views on race, assimilation, and indigenous education coalesced quite harmoniously. The source of this unanimity is both historic and rooted in notions of race.

While Twain and Menzies acknowledged well-worn bromides about the ties between the United States and Australia, there are obvious parallels between the historical developments of both places. The very start of the American nation with the opening of the American Revolution in 1776 prompted the British Government to seek new colonial outposts and to populate places like Australia. Throughout the nineteenth-century meaningful comparisons can be made at major points of transition: both nations had a frontier that promoted expansion and territorial acquisition; both experienced gold rushes at mid-century which launched a hundred-year blight of resource exploitation; both shared common ideas—republican ideals, beliefs in the rights of the individual, aptitude for business, notions of land use, "rags to riches" potential, etc.—which formed the bedrock of national character; both valued the ideals expressed in the American Declaration of Independence and embraced federalism as a governing paradigm; and both have governing documents that share common content and structure.[7]

Australia and the United States, however, also differed on some fundamental points that directly influence indigenous education. In Australia the government relationship with indigenous peoples rested with the individual states while the United States vested authority in the federal government. The laws and policies concerning indigenous peoples in Australia were often inconsistent and contradictory, while the uniformity and rigidity of U.S. legislation failed to acknowledge the cultural differences between indigenous tribes. On another level, the degree of racial separation was in many respects more complex in the United States who was not simply confronting a racial polarity—black and white—but was dealing with swarthy immigrants, freed blacks, "inferior" whites, as well as indigenous peoples who were relegated to "red" on the racial pigmentation scale.[8] While Australia had a small Asian population and

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6. Joseph Siracusa and Yeong-Han Cheong, *America's Australia/Australia's America: A Guide to Issues and References* (Claremont, California: Regina Books, 1997), 1, 4.

7. See R. Else-Mitchell, "American influences on Australian Nationhood," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 62, no. 1 (June 1976): 1-19 for a nuanced discussion on this topic.

8. See Alden Vaughan, "From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian," *American Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (October 1982): 917-953; William Hagan, "Full Blood, Mixed Blood, Generic, and Ersatz," *Arizona and the West* 27, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 309-326; and

a growing cohort of "half-castes,"[9] the turn of the century racial tensions were white-black, or put more exactly white settlers and black indigenous persons. Finally, the legal status of indigenous peoples in the United States and Australia differed significantly. In Australia the colonial administrators and state governments followed the British legal doctrine of *terra nullius*—"there was no sovereign with which they could treat, on more or less equal terms, also as sovereign"[10]—in relating with indigenous peoples, while the United States pursued treaty relations (until 1871) which legally implied a "sovereign-to-sovereign" relationship.[11] The different bureaucratic structures, racial views, and legal status will significantly influence approaches to indigenous education between 1900 and 1950.

In terms of indigenous education in Australia and the United States the event that had the greatest influence on the policies, attitudes, and structures for educating indigenous children was the utter failure of Reconstruction in the United States. Observers in both Australia and the United States noted that the "American experiment with multi-racial democracy—the anarchy of 'Negro rule'—during Radical Reconstruction (1867-1877) had been a tragic mistake. The demise of the short-lived attempt at racial equality convinced many that "the intermingling of an inferior race with a superior one had led to degeneration and degradation on both sides."[12] In both Australia and the United States this attitude promoted xenophobia, prompted passage of restrictive immigration laws, institutionalized paternalism, and instilled a conviction that indigenous peoples faced two choices: assimilation or extinction. In collusion with Christian denominations, both governments pursued assimilation policies aimed at forging a human specimen that embraced Christianity, practiced industrial pursuits (especially agriculture), espoused the tenets of "civil" society, and, with the passage of generations, reflected an increasingly homogeneous national ethos. The

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Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to Be Red," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1997): 625-644 for a complete discussion on the racial categorization of indigenous peoples in the United States between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

9. "The term half-caste first appeared in the late eighteenth century and 'miscegenation' was introduced during the American Civil War to replace 'amalgamation' and thereby avoid confusion with political mergings. Refinements in degree of race mixing were also expressed in terms such as 'quadroon and 'octoroon." Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families, 1800-2000* (Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Center Press, 2000), 134-135.

10. John McCorquodale, "The Legal Classification of Race in Australia," *Aboriginal Studies* 10, no. 1 (1986): 8. See also Ann McGrath, "A National Story," in Ann McGrath (ed.), *Contested Ground: Australian Aborigines Under the British Crown* (Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1995), 1-54 ,"Terra Nullius and Soverignty" in Henry Reynolds, *Aboriginal Sovereignty: Three Nations, One Australia* (Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996), and Libby Riches, "Legislating the Past: Native Title and the History of Aboriginal Australia" in Rodney Harrison and Christine Williamson, *After Captain Cook—The Archaeology of the Recent Indigenous Past in Australia* (Sydney: Archaeological Computing Laboratory, 2002) for balanced and carefully crafted discussions of *terra nullius*.

11. See Francis Paul Prucha, "America's Indians and the Federal Government, 1900-2000," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Winter 2000-2001): 28-29 for a brief, yet informative, discussion of the government-to-government relationship between the United States federal government and recognized Indian tribes.

12. Marilyn Lake, "White Man's Country: The Transnational History of a National Project," *Australian Historical Studies* 122 (2003): 355.

linchpin of these efforts was removing and educating indigenous children in an institutionalized setting far from the degrading influences of traditional life.

This comparative analysis of indigenous education is what Antoine Meillet's described as a "Type II Historical Comparison" where "parallel studies of events can be explained by mutual influence."[13] The indigenous boarding school will be the basis of comparison between the two nations and the influence of government policies, notions of race and assimilation, and the role of Christian denominations "will build a foundation for generalizations that extends beyond particular conditions found in a given area at a particular time."[14]

National Attitudes on Race and Assimiliation

In both the United States and Australia indigenous policies were bureaucratic responses to prevailing late-nineteenth century notions on race and assimilation.[15] The "schoolroom" was the furnace where children of "inferior" races would have an opportunity to observe and replicate the attitudes and behaviors of the dominant majority. The degree of progress was generally predicated on a relative position within a rigid hierarchy; all children would experience some progress and a small percentage would emerge as fully-assimilated members of society. The latter group was the final product of decades of "civilizing" influences and consistent application of assimilationist policies. In a recent essay on the historic progression of race and the American Indian, Nancy Shoemaker asserted that "as a system of categorizing people, race fulfilled Europe's ideological needs by creating the illusion that human difference was biologically ordained. . . . This approach to the historical emergence of race as a system for categorizing people replicated what it purports to critique, since the emphasis on European image-making consigns American Indians and other non-white peoples to a passive role in the construction of knowledge. They exist only as objects of white observation, and the power to label or name resides with Europeans."[16] In Australia and the United States the officials charged with managing

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13. Alette Hill and Boyd Hill, "Marc Bloch and Comparative History," *American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1980): 830.

14. John McQuilton, "Comparing Frontiers: Australia and the United States," *The Australasian Journal of American Studies* 12, no. 1 (July 1993): 29.

15. In a seminal article on assimilation Russell Kazal provides three provocative definitions of the term—". . . referring to processes that result in greater homogeneity within a society;" "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons or groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life;," and "a process by which the culture of . . . a country is transmitted to an adopted citizen." Russell Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1995): 438, 444, and 446. The term "race" refers to "specific groupings of people who share certain characteristics the combinations of which allow them to be distinguished from other such groupings." David Hollinsworth, *Race and Racism in Australia*, (Katoomba, NSW: Social Science Press, 1998), 29.

16. Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to Be Red," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1997): 625.

indigenous affairs—the Chief Protector and Indian Agent—defined racial progress and evaluated the successes and failures of the policies of assimilating racially "inferior" peoples. In the closing decades of the nineteenth centuries the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs quietly sounded the death knell for adult indigenous peoples and focused efforts and resources on rescuing the children who were not completely "contaminated" by camp life. This focus prompted the creation of educational institutions that separated indigenous children from their parents and the negative influences of their culture and mandated the severe application of assimilationist policies. Both government entities and religious denominations embraced this policy as inherently good, and, as such, required prompt and aggressive action. By 1900 boarding schools were the principal vehicle of assimilation and advancement in both nations and while philosophies differed slightly from school to school, all desired the gradual elimination of indigenous culture and life and a discernible progression to the culture and values of the dominant culture.

The goals and objectives of assimilating indigenous children which emerged in the United States around 1890 and forty to fifty years later in Australia included a multitude of countervailing attitudes and ideologies. Many members of the settler-societies in Australia and the United States did not believe that indigenous peoples could be fully absorbed as equals into their respective societies. In their view rapid assimilation was possible for European immigrants whose "whiteness" made them stronger candidates for full membership in society, but "black" and "red" indigenous peoples were destined for menial positions serving the fully-assimilated population. In the minds of many people—government bureaucrats, intellectuals, and especially the settler population—assimilation was not preordained and "the cycle could end in a system of castes or one that included a permanent racial minority."[17] This was clear in an 1869 Supreme Court case in New Mexico Territory which "ruled that industrious, peaceable, intelligent, honest, and virtuous peoples were not Indians." However, "darkening skin, repeated misbehavior, absconding, or sullen attitudes" were sure signs of aboriginality."[18] The potential for an exceptional indigenous person to successfully enter society was never entirely rejected, but considered very rare. This pervasive attitude was shaped by racist ideas, social Darwinism, and the forces of ethnocentrism. Given that schools always unconsciously reflect the values of their society, indigenous institutions experienced an increased emphasis on vocational training to the detriment of academic and industrial preparation at the turn of the century.[19] This focus on preparing indigenous children for lives as laborers and domestics continued until the Second World War.

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17. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation," 445.

18. Hagan, "Full Blood, Mixed Blood, Generic, and Ersatz," 310, and Haebich, *Broken Circles*, 283.

19. It is important to remember the historic context of late nineteenth century educational theory where "industrial training was consistent with the holistic approach of nineteenth century educators. It emphasized the 'habits of civilization'—punctuality, persistence, and attention to detail; in short, industry. Vocational training, on the other hand, prepared students for jobs." Frederick Hoxie, "Redefining Indian Education: Thomas Jefferson Morgan's Program in Disarray," *Arizona and the West* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 10.

The shift from the dual objectives of academic preparation and practical training to a largely vocational focus began in the United States in the mid-1890s and was in full force by 1900. By the opening of the twentieth century "the government had lost faith in Indian advancement, and was working to limit educational opportunities of native peoples.[20] This philosophical transition in indigenous education was formalized in the 1901 *Course of Study*, a curriculum consisting of thirty-one subjects prepared by Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools. "Throughout the course of study, Reel emphasized practical lessons and reminded teachers not to expect too much of their Indian pupils."[21] Indigenous education was guided by philosophies influenced by scientific racism and the progress of Indian students was "measured by shrinking standards of achievement."[22]

The indigenous missions in Western Australia shared these low expectations for their students and provided a curriculum that prepared them to make contributions to the local economy, albeit at the lowest rungs of the economic hierarchy. The records of indigenous missions at the turn of the century are full of statements on the vocational nature of the school curriculum. In indigenous schools the division of labor is always gendered; the boys "are taught carpentry, gardening, and farming in all its branches," while the girls receive instruction "in all the domestic duties, such as needlework, cooking, dressmaking, etc., and the general care of the home."[23] The references to academic preparation are almost always qualified by minimalist terms like "rudimentary" and "elementary." In 1915 the newly-appointed chief protector for Western Australia, A.O. Neville, announced that the ultimate outcome of indigenous education, especially in regards to half- castes, was for students "to be trained in domestic and stock work and sent out to approved work stations."[24]

By 1900 both the United States and Australia had made identical, yet independent, decisions that indigenous students were inferior to the dominant population and that educational programs needed to be crafted in a way that acknowledged the inferior position of indigenous students and, at the same time, provided them with appropriate training to be self-supporting. The various superintendents of Indian education in the United States and the chief protectors in Australia responded by organizing a program of education that had as its purpose the training of low-level laborers and unskilled domestics. Estelle Reel, the infamous schools superintendent, captured the prevailing sentiment in Australia and the United States when she posited that "a civilization without the elements of labor rests on a foundation of sand. Labor is the basis

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20. Hoxie, "Redefining Indian Education," 5.

21. Hoxie, "Redefining Indian Education," 12.

22. Hoxie, "Redefining Indian Education," 18.

23. Annual Report of the Chief Protector of the Aborigines [hereinafter cited as WA ARCP], New Norcia Mission, 1907, J.S. Battye Library of Western Australian History, Perth, WA [hereinafter cited as BL LWA].

24. "Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry Into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children From Their Families." Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, (April 1997): 105.

of all lasting civilizations and the most potent influence for good in the world."[25] The curriculum of indigenous schools in both countries reflected racist theories and attitudes and solidified the belief that the level of education should not exceed the intellectual potential of the students and institutionalized the ideas that indigenous students were incapable of an ordinary standard of education.

Education as a "Pulverizing Engine" of the Dominant Society

By 1900 indigenous education was passing from the control of idealists who desired the eventual equality of their charges to a group of bureaucrats who were focused on minimizing costs and preparing workers to meet the demands of an industrial market. The physical separation of indigenous children from their families, cultures, and camp life was the structure endorsed by both governments as the most effective means of "educating" and "civilizing" their indigenous charges. Despite often-quoted claims that Australia and the United States were fully secular nations, the arduous demands and remote locations of indigenous missions and schools necessitated a heavy reliance on various religious denominations to establish and staff the institutions. By way of illustration, between 1842 and 1950 forty "Aboriginal Children's Institutions"[26] were opened in Western Australia and thirty of them—three-quarters—were operated under the auspices of Christian churches. This level of denominational dependence was mirrored in the United States where an overwhelming majority of boarding schools were founded by Christian denominations.[27] In this rare unity between church and state it is important to recall that "while there may have been no premeditated collusion between missions and governments, nevertheless . . . the missionary was a representative of his or her country whether he was authorized to be or not."[28] The objectives of promoting a sedentary life, encouraging industry and hard work, inculcating the rudiments of "civilization," and advocating gradual adsorption of indigenous children were the fundamental components of both indigenous schools and Christian conversion. The missionary and bureaucrat met on a rational and level playing field—the indigenous school—and worked harmoniously to achieve their particular goals.

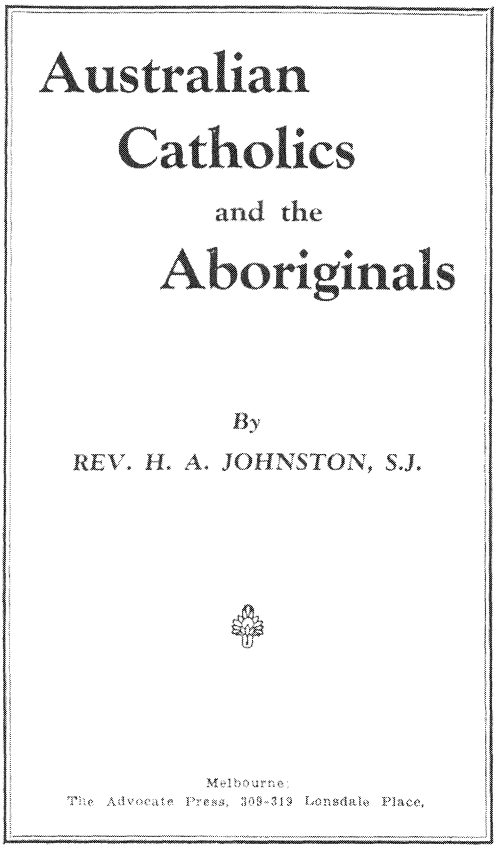
The comparison of indigenous schools in the United States and Australia demands that the focus be carefully defined and that institutions selected for transnational comparison share some common elements. For purposes of this discussion the analysis will center on eight Catholic indigenous schools, four in each nation. These institutions cover a broad chronological span, encompass the philosophies of several

25. Prucha, "American Indians and the Federal Government," 30.

26. Haebich, *Broken Circle,* 229-230.

27. "[In 1900] there were 32 contract schools of private or church organizations for which the government paid a per diem cost per student, and 22 mission schools." Prucha, "American Indians and the Federal Government," 29-30.

28. Monica Turvey, "Missionaries and Imperialism: Opponents or Progenitors of Empire?—The New Guinea Case," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 65, no. 2 (September 1979): 91.



Cover of "Australian Catholics and the Aboriginals" (Source: Benedictine Archives, New Norcia, Western Australia)

Catholic missionary orders, and represent good examples of denominational-government cooperation. Later, in order to enrich the comparisons, the number of institutions will expand to include Protestant and government schools in North and South Dakota and Western Australia.[29]

Since the objective is to compare how these schools functioned as agents of assimilation and homogenization over a fifty-year period, emphasis will be placed on curriculum, industrial pursuits, the attitudes of the teachers towards their students, indigenous perceptions of the schools, and the overall influence of these institutions. In terms of an appropriate context for analysis it is important to recall that government-indigenous relations rarely shared common ground, and this discussion on

29. In the larger project the comparisons will include the Swan Native and Half-Caste Mission, Perth (Anglican), Moola Bulla, East Kimberley (Government), Rapid City Indian School (Government), South Dakota, and the Santee Normal Training School (American Missionary Association), North Dakota. In addition, the comparison will be extended to indigenous schools in New Zealand and Canada.

Indigenous Schools

Australia	United States[a]
New Norcia, Victoria Plains, Western Australia, Order of Saint Benedict, 1846	Fort Totten Indian Industrial School, Fort Totten, North Dakota, Grey Nuns of Montreal, 1874
Beagle Bay, West Kimberley, Western Australia, Pallottines, 1891	Fort Yates Indian Industrial School, Fort Yates, North Dakota, Order of Saint Benedict, 1880
Drysdale River Mission, East Kimberley, Western Australia, Order of Saint Benedict, 1907	Saint Francis Mission School, Rosebud Indian Reservation, South Dakota, Society of Jesus, 1886
Lombadina, West Kimberley, Western Australia, Pallottines, 1911	Holy Rosary Mission School, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, Society of Jesus, 1888

[a] See James T. Carroll, *Seeds of Faith: Catholic Indian Boarding Schools, 1874-1926* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000); Carroll, "Catholic Indian Boarding Schools and Sioux Catholicism," in Paula Miller and Richard Fossey, *Mapping the Catholic Cultural Landscape* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 211-222; Carroll, "Self-Direction, Activity, and Syncretism: Catholic Indian Boarding Schools at Contact," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 78-89; and Carroll, "A Beacon of Indian Education: Fort Totten, North Dakota (forthcoming from the North Dakota State Historical Society in 2005) for a complete history and analysis of the four schools in the United States.

indigenous boarding schools reflects this relational anomaly. On the one hand, bureaucrats and missionaries considered "centralizing and segregating [indigenous children] and subjecting them to various strategies to turn them into settled agricultural workers,"[30] committed Christians, and "civilized" nationals as the principal goals of education. On the other hand, indigenous peoples in both places considered experiential encounters, generational transmission of cultural teachings, ceremonial rites of passage, and age-appropriate modeling to be the linchpins of learning. The Anglo-centric model relied heavily on institutionalization to achieve their objectives while the native approach was completely unstructured and familial. In light of the oppositional forces at work it is hardly surprising that the negative effects of institutional boarding schools continue to receive a great deal of attention. Much of the discussion in this analysis focuses on the "institutional" side of the school question, but acknowledges and appreciates traditional modes of learning.

The striking similarities between curriculums is partly explained by the fact that Australia was closely observing American efforts to "educate and civilize" their indigenous charges in the decades following the Civil War. What initially began as a highly idealistic and competitive program to prepare indigenous children for full membership in society was reduced to a vocational course of study with some rudimentary academic training by the turn of the century. By way of illustration, in March

30. Haebich, *Broken Circles*, 143.

1878 the students at Fort Totten in North Dakota "spent equal time pursuing reading, writing, geography, history, and arithmetic, as gardening, sewing, washing, and cleaning." In 1890 the students at Fort Totten were introduced to a new curriculum that emphasized "arithmetic, government, geography, spelling, English, and composition. Industrial training concentrated on agriculture and livestock production for the male students and housekeeping for the females. In 1901, however, the new course of study reduced the academic branches and put the greatest effort on industrial and vocational training.[31] In the span of thirty years curriculums at indigenous schools in the United States went from a common school approach that espoused eventual equality to one that promoted job preparation. At the turn of the twentieth century "many believed Indians were inferior, not capable of assimilation into American society, and should not be trained for something unobtainable."[32] This minimalist education continued in indigenous schools in the United States until 1934 when a new wave of reform revitalized educational efforts.

In the early part of the century an official in Australia provided the following advice to indigenous educators: "The teaching should be of a very simple character; it should include reading, writing, and elements of arithmetic . . . moral training should be given in the schools on the simplest and broadest lines possible; but the primary object must be to train the natives in industrial habits. Until such time as they acquire these habits there is no chance whatever of raising them from their present condition."[33] In this connection, the Benedictine Abbot of New Norcia reported to the Chief Protector in 1907 "that boys over 14 are employed in various capacities in the Mission. They are taught carpentering, boot-making, gardening, and farming in all its branches, and the management of different steam-driven engines and machines."[34] In another report six years later the abbot posited: "The school time for boys is three hours daily, and the daily routine during the year is broken only at the time of olive picking (a very lucrative enterprise for the New Norcia Monastery). The lads glory in this work and think it fine fun to be climbing trees and throwing down the ripe olives."[35] On the other side of the gender divide, the girls at Beagle Bay Mission were busy with "needlework, cooking, washing, and all kinds of housework."[36] The academic program was generally limited to the 3 R's with some variations that included "headline copy, mental arithmetic, geography, grammar, letter writing, tables, singing, drill, etc."[37] This structure continued into the 1960s.

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31. See Carroll, "A Beacon of Indian Education."

32. Robert Trennert, "From Carlisle to Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of the Indian Outing System, 1878-1930," *Pacific Historical Review* LII, no. 3 (August 1983): 283.

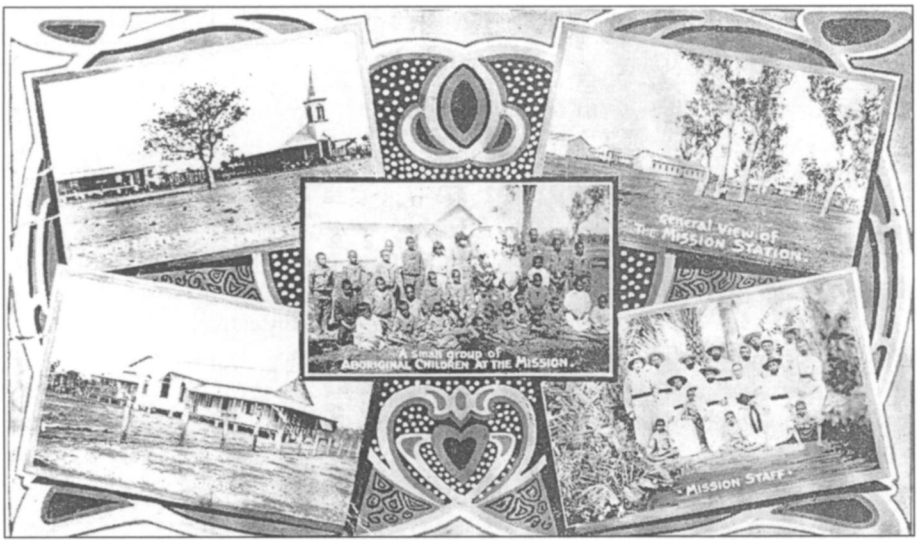
33. Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997), 85.

34. WA ARCP, New Norcia Mission, Annual Report of the Chief Protector of the Aborigines, 1907, BL LWA.

35. WA ARCP, New Norcia Mission, 1913, BL LWA.

36. Phyllis Fogarty, "History of Beagle Bay Mission, 1890-1962," B.A. Thesis, Claremont Teachers' College, 8, BL LWA.

37. WA ARCP, Lombadina Mission, 1916, BL LWA.



"Beagle Bay Mission and Its Work" (Source: Saint John of God Archives, Subiaco, Western Australia)

The curriculum in indigenous schools in the United States and Australia were almost identical. The heavy emphasis on industrial and vocational, however, was not an appropriate method if the goal was the eventual inclusion of indigenous peoples into mainstream society. Both countries trumpeted this objective, albeit with the United States doing so in a more strenuous manner. Schools for non-indigenous children were downplaying industrial pursuits, preferring to emphasize academic skills that would eventually result in nearly universal secondary schooling in both countries by the 1920s. The curriculum gap was a self-fulfilling prophecy that insured indigenous peoples would never achieve racial, intellectual, or economic equality. The academic programs at indigenous schools affirmed the prevalent belief that indigenous culture "was merely a reflection of primordial racial shortcomings and impervious to education. . . ."[38]

The life and regimen at indigenous boarding schools were not significantly transformed by national boundaries; the U.S. and Australia were both very heavily influenced by the dictates of the Protestant "work ethic." The promotion of self-discipline, industry, and practical pursuits were institutionally enshrined in the indigenous schools. Apart from the debasing effects of camp life, boarding schools were preferred because they offered a rigid schedule and modeled efficiency and hard work. In a discussion on education on the Pine Ridge, Thomas Andrews amplifies the importance of the quantification of time at indigenous schools: "Assimilationists

38. Alden Vaughan, "From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian, *American Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (October 198): 953.

Daily Schedule, Beagle Bay Mission, The Kimberley, WA, 1908[a]

6:15 AM	Rising
6:30 AM	Church
6:45-7:15 AM	Breakfast
7:30-9:30 AM	Academic Lessons
9:30-11:30 AM	Play and Odd Jobs
11:30-1:00 PM	Dinner and Rest
1:00-2:00 PM	Academic Lessons (outdoors)
2:00-3:00 PM	Play
3:00-4:30 PM	Odd Jobs and Gardening
4:30-5:30 PM	Academic Lessons
5:30-6:00 PM	Play
6:00 PM	Church
6:30 PM	Tea
8:15 PM	Bedtime

[a] Phyllis Fogarty, "History of the Beagle Bay Mission, 1890-1962," 10, BL LWA.

divided the school day into three segments embodying their trinity of detribalization: morning academic instruction, afternoon industrial training, and evening moral edification and community work."[39] The Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the United States and similar documents filed with the Chief Protector of the Aborigines are replete with specific references to daily structure and industry. The daily schedule at Beagle Bay Mission for 1908 could easily be replicated at most indigenous boarding schools in the United States and Australia until after the Second World War.

The value of this rigid and strictly quantified schedule was clear in the minds of the mission officials who rarely wavered in this area. In 1915 the superior of Beagle Bay reported to the chief inspector: "The school hours during the year are 8 to 12 in the morning and 1 to 3 in the afternoon. About four hours during the daily routine are given to play and recreation in the open air; the rest of the time to light duties, such as cleaning of houses and grounds. The higher standards do not spend all their time in school, as their presence is required for several hours in the sewing rooms, garden, farms, and different workshops.[40] At Fort Totten in North Dakota the day was divided between academic endeavors and practical pursuits that prepared the boys to be productive and happy yeoman farmers and the girls to be good homemakers.

The strong emphasis on time and industry reflect a number of cultural factors that existed in both the United States and Australia. "The 'habits of civilization'—punctuality, persistence, and attention to detail"[41]—served the objectives of missionaries

39. Thomas Andrews, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakotas and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920," *Western Historical Quarterly* 33 (Winter 2002): 418.

40. WA ARCP, Beagle Bay Mission, 1915, BL LWA.

41. Hoxie, "Redefining Indian Education," 10.

Government Support for Indigenous Schools in the United States and Australia, 1900-1930[a]

Nation	1900	1930
United States	$128.00 p.a.	$167.00 p.a.
Australia	£ 5 p.a.	£ 14 p.a.

[a] These amounts are rough approximations based on the reports filed with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Chief Protectors. Government financial support to schools is difficult to determine exactly because the degree of support varied based on type of school, amount of land provided gratis by the government, degree of self-sufficiency, geographic location, etc...However, historic monetary conversions of government support for indigenous schools indicates that the per capita payments were far larger in the United States than they were in Australia. Using American dollars in 1930 government support in the US was $167 (approximately $1,837 in 2003 dollars) and State support in Australia was $70 (approximately $770 in 2003 dollars). While both nations never provided adequate support to indigenous schools and believed that student labor should match dollar for dollar government funding, the United States was clearly the more generous partner.

who relied on stability in their quest for observant converts, employers who desired a cheap work force inclined to submit to the regimen of the time-clock, and government bureaucrats who wanted to reduce the cost of caring for indigenous peoples. The careful attention to the habits of industry was also guiding philosophy of non-indigenous education in the United States and Australia; however the efforts at indigenous schools were frequently disconnected from the demands of the local economy, subject to wide swings in funding, and tended to graduate students who were only ready to assume menial jobs. Another underlying reason for the heavy industrial emphasis was the fact that government support to indigenous boarding schools was not sufficient to cover all of the operating costs of these institutions. In a very real sense, the manual labor of young children was critical for the efficient conduct of the schools. In both countries indigenous parents often complained that "the hard labor required at the industrial school[s] . . . had little educational or practical value and was harmful to the health of the children."[42] In this regard, a 1903 report in Western Australia found that "the mission New Norcia in Victoria Plains was a money making enterprise and a far worse slavery system than ever the American system was."[43] While the extent of student labor varied from institution to institution it is clear that many boarding schools crossed the line between occupational training and forced labor.

The teachers and staff at indigenous boarding schools were often highly-idealistic and committed individuals who worked diligently to provide basic education and to create a school environment that contained a measure of humanity. In virtually every

42. "Proceedings of the Meetings Held by Supervisor Chalcraft with the Indians of the Devils Lake Reservation on Friday, 23 November 1900, and Monday 26 November 1900," Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Series 1, Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin [hereinafter cited as AMU].

43. A.M. Fernando to President of the Aborigines Board and Chief Protector Princep, 1121.255l557Al03, States Records Office of Western Australia, Perth, WA [hereinafter cited as SRO WA].

situation these people faced intense isolation, constant financial problems, endless challenges, and hostile environments, both geographic and institutional. A focused analysis of school records reveals that many staff members resigned after a brief tenure, suffered from an alarming number of physical and psychological ailments, experienced frustration in their efforts to educate their charges, and interacted with a bureaucracy which often extinguished altruistic motives.

Despite the significant challenges that educating indigenous children presented to the teaching staff most were motivated by a firm ideology that these people faced two options: "civilization or extinction." The missionaries and teachers were anchored in the Darwinian belief that a strict racial hierarchy divided humanity and whites—tenders of the highest rung—had a moral duty to assist less fortunate races. In a late nineteenth and early twentieth century mindset, the first step in the process was "to induce them to settle down and adopt the customs of civilized life, to become industrious, and turn their attention to the useful arts."[44] This approach allowed missionaries to evangelize the indigenous tribes, assisted in educational efforts, reduced government expenditures, introduced the natives to the rudiments of capitalism, and offered land-hungry white settlers large parcels of land once occupied by nomadic tribes. In both the United States and Australia the church and school-house became the primary vehicles of rapid assimilation and "civilization."

In the limited confines of this study, the staff of the schools were made up of Roman Catholic religious who were unencumbered by family responsibilities, committed to a specific work, supported financially by the church, and enthused about working with indigenous children. All of these factors reduced the influence of the negative aspects of working in indigenous schools. However, in both Australia and the United States, the religious assigned to indigenous missions at the turn of the century were overwhelmingly European immigrants who recently arrived in their respective countries. Many scholars have argued that the European origins of the teaching staff had a unique impact on the institutions. "As foreigners in a country which considered their religion as alien, they could more easily accept a degree of cultural diversity. They probably were conscious of pressures on immigrant Catholics to conform and to be assimilated into the mainstream of American [and Australian] life. Encountering this atmosphere, they would not identify Christianity with white American [or Australian] civilization."[45] Nonetheless, the experience of arriving in a foreign land and being quickly torpedoed onto a remote frontier to establish Eurocentric institutions certainly posed some significant challenges for the religious staff.

In each mission at least one missionary-teacher mastered the language of the people and frequently produced grammar texts to assist others in acquiring the rudiments of the local language. The early workers at the missions believed that ". . . 'faith enters by the ear' and the native tongues were the natural means through which the

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44. Michael Stevens, "Catholic and Protestant Missionaries Among Wisconsin Indians: The Territorial Period," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 58, no. 2 (Winter 1974-1975): 142

45. Stevens, "Catholic and Protestant Missionaries Among Wisconsin Indians," 148

National Origins of Religious Staff, c. 1900

Mission	Religious Order	Place of National Origin
New Norcia and Drysdale River Missions	Order of Saint Benedict	Spain
Beagle Bay and Lombadina Missions	Pallottines	Germany[a]
	Sisters of St. John of God	Ireland[b]
Fort Totten Indian Industrial School	Grey Nuns of Montreal	French Canada
Fort Yates Indian Industrial School	Order of Saint Benedict (Monks and Sisters)	Germany
Saint Francis and Holy Rosary Missions	Society of Jesus	Germany
	Sisters of St. Francis	

[a] In both world wars of the twentieth century the Pallottine missionaries at Beagle Bay and Lombadina were a source of concern for government officials because of their German-origins. In both wars the Pallottine brothers and priests spent some period interned as "enemy-aliens." See Archbishop Clune to Joseph Bischofs, Superior at Beagle Bay, 13 April 1916 and Archbishop Panico, Apostolic Delegate, to Bishop Otto Raible, Bishop of Broome, 22 October 1940, for a complete review of this issue, Correspondence File, Archives-Diocese of Broome, Western Australia (hereinafter cited as ADB), accessed in Sisters of St. John of God Subiaco Archives (hereinafter cited as SJG SA).

[b] The Sisters of Saint John of God were, with one exception, all Irish-born women who were recruited or volunteered for the aboriginal mission at Beagle Bay. The Sisters in Kimberley became autonomous from the Subiaco motherhouse when Beagle Bay opened. In 1913 the Kimberley community sent three sisters to assist at Lombadina mission.

faith was transmitted, learning and preserving them became sacred acts."[46] Moreover, most of the Catholic missionaries accepted the need to master several languages, including, in many cases, English, and were not daunted by the challenges of indigenous languages. At Fort Totten in North Dakota the Grey Nuns ran a bi-lingual (English and Sioux language—some would claim a tri-lingual environment if the native language of the sisters were included) school until 1887 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs ruled that "in all schools conducted by missionary organizations it is required that all instruction be given in the English language."[47] While they were careful to adhere to the "letter of the law" to avoid government criticism, the missionaries at Fort Totten continued to use and study the vernacular outside of school hours. In Western Australia the Benedictines of New Norcia published hymnals and catechisms in the native languages to assist in the process of evangelization and conversion of the indigenous population.[48] This approach was rarely replicated at

46. Peter Dorsey, "Going to School With Savages: Authorship and Authority Among the Jesuits of New France," *William and Mary Quarterly* LV, no. 3 (July 1998): 410.

47. See "Correspondence on the Subject of Teaching the Vernacular in Indian Schools, 1887-1888," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888) for a full discussion on the English-only policy.

48. Alphonse Tachon, one of the first Trappists to work in the Kimberley, started language study and cultural analysis of the indigenous people immediately after arrving to start the mission.

Benedictine Sisters, Fort Yates, South Dakota, 1910 (Source: Archives, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota)

Protestant or government missions because the missionaries were native-born and struggled with indigenous languages and official policy called for an English-only mode of instruction.

The most challenging aspect of studying indigenous schools prior to 1950 is to include "indigenous voices" into the narrative. Most of the records for the early history of these institutions are almost exclusively from the "missionary-agent-government" (sometimes referred to as the "trinity of oppression") point of view. To unearth the views of the children in these institutions one must be willing to explore oral historical accounts which are frequently incomplete and rarely cover the entire period. The other vectors into the indigenous perspective are government investigations where indigenous adults were free to express their views to neutral parties and indigenous references in secondary sources.

A one-sided, yet pertinent, lens into the life of indigenous children attending boarding schools emerges in a televised documentary, "The Habits of New Norcia: Challenging a Version of History," which is a scathing account of life at Saint Joseph and St. Mary Orphanages conducted by the Benedictines in Western Australia. Past students from the 1930s to 1960s reported that both institutions were jail-like settings characterized by back-breaking labor and severe discipline. The girls were trained to "wash, mend, and cook," gaining experience by working as menial servants at Saint Elizabeth's, a boarding school for white girls located a couple of hundred yards from the orphanage. In 1970, a teacher identified as Sister Mary opined that "I have

Sioux Indians and Clergy Entering Church, c. 1920 (Source: Archives, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota)

worked with natives for forty-two years and I still cannot understand how their minds work. The people who can understand these people have not been born yet. They cannot understand the moral code set up by whites. And few accept the religious beliefs we teach them. We try to reach them, but though they seem to agree on the surface, underneath they are thinking something different."[49] In this misguided assessment, Sister Mary may have touched upon a truth about white attitudes at indigenous missions.

National Policies on Indigenous Education

Indigenous policies almost always support the "miner's canary" metaphor which describes a reality where government actions are wrapped in humanitarian and idealistic goals to conceal the noxious effects of official policy. The bureaucratic nature of government and the traditional cultures of indigenous peoples are inherently polarized and rife with conflict. On the one hand, government officials promote policies that they consider "equitable and efficient"—the two major criteria for evaluating government action. On the other side of the divide, indigenous peoples are always suspect of official polices aimed at their improvement and believe "that the lamb cannot expect mercy from the wolf."[50] The task of drawing comparisons between official policies in two nations requires a degree of refinement especially in

49. "The Habits of New Norcia: Challenging a Version of History"—Video Support Notes, 2, LWA.
50. Haebich, *Broken Circles*, 292.

Indigenous Policy: The United States and Australia, 1787-Present

United States		Australia[a]	
1787-1832	Continuation of British Policy/Annihilation	1788-1860	Initial Contact/Crown Policy
1832-1850	Removal	1860-1930	Protected Status and Segregation
1850-1887	Concentration	1930-1970	Assimilation and Absorption
1887-1933	Allotment and Private Land Ownership	1970-Present	Integration and Limited Self-Management
1933-1953	Period of Cultural Revitalization		
1953-1971	Termination of the Federal Trust Relationship		
1971-Present	Self-Determination		

[a] For a first-hand account of aboriginal policy in the first-half of the twentieth-century see A.P. Elkin, "Australian Aboriginal and White Relations: A Personal Record," *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* 48, no. 3 (June 1952): 208-230.

terms of chronology and nomenclature. A linear review of indigenous policies in Australia and the United States reveal very similar patterns and trajectories: continuation of British policy, removal and protection, concentration and segregation, assimilation and absorption, and self-determination. However, the promulgation of the various policies is generally separated by fifty years. For example, the United States initiated "concentration and segregation" in the 1850s, while this emerged in Australia around 1900. The problem of the chronological gap for comparative purposes is reduced because both countries were responding to virtually identical demographic and political pressures when they initiated indigenous policies. Demand for land and pressure to separate indigenous peoples from white-settlers reached a critical point in United States in the decade before the American Civil War, while identical forces were at work in Australia at the turn-of-the-century. The following graphic illustrates this point.

While overarching government policies will influence indigenous education, the focus here will be on government actions that have a direct bearing on indigenous schools. In the United States the inaugural policy on the role of education and assimilation emerged in 1871 when President Ulysses Grant announced that his "Peace Policy" would assign Indian reservations to various religious denominations who were responsible for nominating Indian agents and establishing and staffing schools for the education and "civilization" of America's indigenous population. In most cases, the Indian Bureau preferred boarding schools (on and off reservation) because they provided the greatest opportunity for the civilizing influences to take hold of the indigenous child. The further removed the indigenous child was from the "nefarious" influences of family, tribe, and camp the greater the likelihood that subsequent generations would accept "civil" mores, farming, and eventual blending into American society. While some indigenous parents successfully resisted the removal of their

children to off-reservation boarding schools, a majority were forced to send their children to reservation boarding schools for an extended period.

The Indian agents, "who came close to being absolute rulers in their wilderness domains,"[51] used a variety of tactics to force enrollment of all eligible children in boarding schools. The forcible removal of indigenous children from stable reservation families was rarely attempted; however reservation officials frequently denied rations and tribal annuities to those who failed to surrender their children. In some cases, children were labeled as orphaned, abandoned, or neglected in order to prompt legal removal. Once a child was enrolled in school it was extremely difficult to have them returned to their families before the conclusion of their studies. The racial stereotypes, legal barriers, geographic isolation, and naiveté of indigenous peoples made it very difficult for them to challenge policies and to protect their children.

The status of indigenous education in the United States in 1900 was clearly outlined by Francis Paul Prucha, S.J., in an overview of twentieth century indigenous policy:

> Government officials and reformers of the late nineteenth century well understood that effective schools were necessary if their programs for detribalization, individualization, Christianization, and self-support were to succeed, and by 1900 their objectives were being met for a large percentage of Indian children. There was then in place a three-fold system of large off-reservation boarding schools (25 of them), 81 smaller boarding schools on the reservation (with the same goals but less impressive facilities and programs), and 147 community day schools scattered over the reservations, whose pupils resided at home. . . . There were also 32 contract schools of private or church organizations for which the government paid a per diem cost per student, and 22 mission schools; only a very small number of Indian children attended public school.[52]

The bureaucratic apparatus and philosophy of indigenous education did not change much in the first three decades of the twentieth century with the exception of some attempts to integrate indigenous students into white public schools. This change was primarily a cost-saving attempt on the part of the federal government whose official always sought ways to reduce the budget of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The resistance of both white and indigenous parents to this plan limited its implementation.

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt was a major milestone for indigenous education because the depression-era leader appointed a highly idealistic Commissioner of Indian Affairs and was willing to increase funding of the Indian Bureau. John Collier, a social worker and liberal advocate, was named Commissioner of Indian Affairs [a position that he filled for a longer period than any other Commissioner in the history of the nation] and immediately started to revitalize and change the focus of indigenous education. Armed with the scathing Meriam Report (1928) which vilified indigenous schools, Collier upgraded educational facilities, encouraged public education for indigenous children, and secured financial support to send qualified

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51. Prucha, "American Indians and the Federal Government," 33.
52. Ibid. 29-30.

indigenous students to college. In 1934 Congress approved the Wheeler-Howard Act[53] which embodied, in part, Collier's goals for indigenous education. It declared that Congress was committed "to the study of Indian civilization and [to] preserve and develop the special contributions and achievements of such civilization . . . the Commissioner of Indian Affairs is directed to prepare curricula for Indian schools adapted to the needs of Indian students, including courses in Indian history, Indians arts and crafts, the social and economic problems of the Indians, and the history and problems of Indian administration."[54] Collier enthusiastically accepted this mandate and provided funding aimed at revitalizing indigenous cultures. He believed that indigenous schools should work for "assimilation, not into our culture but into modern life, and the preservation and intensification of heritage"[55]—a complete reversal of sixty years of policy.

Between 1871 and 1933 federal policies moved from forced assimilation by means of boarding schools to using those same schools for cultural resurgence. While many indigenous students in the United States continued to attend boarding schools due to the isolation of reservations, the curriculum reflected indigenous culture and parents were invited to be actively involved in the life of the schools. The "corruption of the camp" mentality was replaced by recognition of cultural identity that would influence indigenous education until 1950, albeit with less emphasis during the years of the Second World War.

In Australia all indigenous policies were crafted and implemented at the state level. Between 1900 and 1950 the issue of transferring authority for indigenous peoples to the Commonwealth Government was formally discussed on four occasions. In 1913 the "Australian Association for the Advancement of Science recommended nationalizing the question and endeavoring to treat the aboriginal problem as a whole on a systematic and scientific plan under federal control."[56] This organizational recommendation was not received favorably by the states because of historic opposition to centralization and opposition from powerful political and economic forces who wanted to retain control over laws pertaining to the employment of indigenous labor. In April 1937 the Conference on Aboriginal Welfare unanimously adopted a resolution—"Uniformity of Legislation"—which stated: "That the details of administration, in accordance with the general principles agreed upon, be left to the individual States, but there shall be uniformity of legislation as far as possible."[57] While state-level control persisted until 1972, the various laws relating to indigenous peoples in the six states and the Northern Territory were quite similar. The record provides abundant evidence that the states were in close contact with one another which explains the leg-

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53. See Michael Smith, "The Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934: The Indian New Deal," *Journal of the West* X, no. 3 (July 1971): 521-534 for a full treatment of this legislation.

54. Hearings before the House Committee on Indian Affairs on the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 73rd Cong., 2nd Session, 7.

55. Smith, "The Wheeler-Howard Act," 524.

56. WA ARCP, 1913, 4.

57. WA ARCP, 1937.

islative consistency of the first half of the twentieth century. However, leaving law-making at the local level rarely benefited the indigenous people. The powerful lobbies in the state government's almost always desired rigid segregation, demanded open and cheap access to indigenous labor, and coveted valuable lands occupied by aboriginal peoples. Since indigenous people were not enfranchised, the interests of the white constituents almost always prevailed.

In Western Australia legislation relating to indigenous education dates to the Industrial and Reformatories School Act of 1865 which declared that "all children with an aboriginal mother were automatically deemed to be 'neglected' and magistrates could place them in institutions for a maximum of seven years and they could be sent out to service at the age of twelve." This law provided the legal foundation for the forcible removal of children in Western Australia that continued into the early 1960s. Initially this practice was limited to a small number of children, but with the increasing white population migrating to Western Australia in the last decades of the nineteenth century demands for more land and rigid segregation increased and the government responded accordingly. In 1886 the Aborigines Protection Board was created to "protect the physical well-being of the Aborigines" and had the authority to "bind any Aboriginal or half-caste child as an apprentice until 21."[58] The legal principle that government officials had the power to remove indigenous children from their families was clear by 1900 and most of the stakeholders—government officials, missionaries, and landowners—endowed this idea with benevolence. It was argued that indigenous children, especially the half-castes, needed to be removed from their camps in order accelerate the "civilizing" process and the industrial training they would require to become productive members of society. Protectors and sub-protectors were appointed by the board to assist in these efforts. In an effort to centralize the bureaucracy and to formalize state control of aboriginal affairs, the Aborigines Act of 1897 abolished the Aborigines Protection Board and created the Aborigines Department to deal with indigenous issues.

The legislation that had the greatest influence on indigenous education in Western Australia was the Aborigines Act of 1905. This act "gave legal authorization for the forcible removal of half-caste aboriginal children from their home. The practice of forcible removal was pursued in an unofficial manner in the late nineteenth century but was formally legislated in the first decade of the twentieth century.[59] The chief

58. A660—The Aborigines Protection Act 1886 (50 Vic. No. 25) in John McCorquodale, *Aborigines and the Law: A Digest* (Canberra, ACT: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1987), 92.

59. In addition to the various Aborigines Acts passed, indigenous children were also subject to various child welfare acts passed in Western Australia. The State Children's Act of 1907 declared that "a 'state child' meant a 'destitute child' or 'neglected child' received into a government institution or a subsidized institution, or apprenticed or placed out under the authority of the Act." "After the Removal: A Submission by the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia to the National Inquiry into Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Children From Their Families," 1996, 21. This act was frequently cited in the removal of aboriginal children, particularly from more settled portions of WA. The authority and power over children was renewed in the passage of a child welfare act in 1947.

protector was made the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and half-caste child under the age of sixteen and thereby acquired the authority to deal with the children in whatever manner he saw fit."[60] The looming presence and power of the Chief Protectors had a major influence on indigenous boarding schools in Western Australia. Between 1898 and 1940 only three men held the positions of chief protector: Henry Charles Princep (1898-1907), Charles Frederick Gale (1908-1915), and Auber Octavius Neville[61] (1915-1940). These three, especially Princep and Neville, were the major architects of education policies for indigenous children in the first half of the twentieth century. To execute the new law these men opened scores of educational institutions[62] for indigenous children under the auspices of various religious denominations or the state government.

The chief protector established procedures aimed at removing indigenous children from the various townships and camps and provided financial support for education. The mission schools quickly responded to the challenges of the new policy and were motivated by the ideals of "civilizing and converting" indigenous children and the practicalities of government financial support. Father George Walter, superior at Beagle Bay, alerted the chief protector the mission was prepared to take additional inmates to preserve them from neglect and the evil influences of native life. Between 1907 and 1913 the student population at this mission more than quadrupled, from 35 to 147.[63] This demographic explosion was replicated at virtually every boarding school for indigenous children in Western Australia. The mission schools received one shilling per day for each child enrolled to offset the cost of education and upkeep. The miserly support from the government increased somewhat over the years; however, the financial assistance never covered the entire cost. The chief protector expected the mission schools to generate nearly fifty percent of the cost of keeping indigenous children (£ for £) due to the free land grant provided to the missions and the gratuitous labor of the children.[64]

While the 1905 Act was the major legislation affecting indigenous education between 1900 and 1950, several other pieces of legislation influenced indigenous schools and deserve mention. In 1936 the Native Administration Act defined the term "native," appointed traveling inspectors to report on conditions in indigenous communities and native institutions, and created the Department of Native Affairs.[65] This legislation provided an aura of legality for the forcible removal of children, mandated

60. C.T. Crawford (ed.), *A New History of Western Australia* (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1981), 145.

61. See Pat Jacobs, *Minister Neville* (Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1990) for a biographical treatment of Chief Protector Neville.

62. According to Haebich, *Broken Circles*, 229-230, a total fifty-seven institutions were opened for intermittent periods between the passage of the act and its repeal in 1963.

63. See Fr. George Walter to Chief Protector, 29 September 1906, 1121.255|24|06, SRO WA and ARCP WA, 1907 and 1913, BL LWA.

64. See A.O. Neville's Report, 6 June 1917, 1171.993|295|1928, SRO WA.

65. See A697—Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1936 in McCorquodale, *Aborigines and the Law*, 97.

government regulation of schools, changed reporting structures, and replaced the title of chief protector with commissioner of native affairs. The commissioner and traveling inspectors functioned under the draconian powers outlined in the 1905 Act.[66]

In the United States and Western Australia government leaders "never quite overcame the frontiersman's attitude"[67] towards indigenous people. In both locations policy was always carefully couched in late nineteenth and early twentieth century racial ideology—civilization, assimilation, blending, and absorption into the dominant culture. However, white attitudes towards indigenous people consistently emphasized the inherent inferiority of the indigenous cultures and the need to maintain careful segregation. As late as the 1960s, white parents in the U.S. and Australia were able to prevent indigenous children from enrolling in public schools on the basis of their poor hygiene and limited intellectual ability. It was not until the unrest of the 1960s that indigenous rights received a fair hearing in legislatures and educational institutions responded to the cultural character of their students.

Conclusion: Similarities and Differences

The precise nature of this comparison and the narrow chronological focus—indigenous boarding schools over fifty years—provides great benefits and significant conundrums for comparative history. The tight focus of this topic assumes an understanding that the United States and Australia share some very fundamental cultural similarities—British culture, frontier ethos, settler society, English language, internal hierarchies (inferior/superior), fixation on pigmentation, definition of "civilization," notions of hegemony, a belief in "manifest destiny," and the like. All of these ideas have a bearing on the development of policies and institutions for educating indigenous children, yet receives only passing and oblique treatment in this analysis. The institutional spotlight, however, provides a manageable arena for examining the historical and theoretical similarities and differences between the two nations. Fort Totten, New Norcia, and Beagle Bay manifest the cultural assumptions and ideology that permeated indigenous education in the first half of the twentieth-century. In both countries the primary objective of schools and education was to "improve" the future of indigenous children and, more importantly, to transform them to a point where they could be viewed in a more positive light by the white majority and respond appropriately to the cultural expectations of dominant society. While both nations shared many common views, theoretical and historic differences "muddy the waters" and enrich the comparison.

The centrality of "race" was far more prominent in Australia than it was in the United States. The Americans measured the advancement of indigenous peoples

66. See A.P. Elkin, "Education of Native Races in Pacific Countries," *Oceania* 7, no. 2 (September 1936): 145-168 for a different perspective on aboriginal education during this period. He presents a number of ideas that support a progressive policy commencing in the 1930s.

67. Smith, "The Wheeler-Howard Act," 521.

using cultural hallmarks—"civilized" pursuits, economic advancement, educational attainment, notions of private property, physical appearance, and patriotism. Indigenous boarding schools were deemed successes or failures by the degree to which their students manifested American culture and adopted the "white man's ways." In Australia, however, progression was gauged by the "breeding out" of aboriginal racial traits. Government policies between 1900 and 1950 affected all aboriginal children, yet the motivation for most of the legislation and funding of schools was to segregate and remove "half-castes" from the nefarious influences of the full-bloods and to encourage intermarriage with whites. A.O. Neville, a long-reigning chief protector is Western Australia, envisioned an ideal society where over the course of generations the race problem would gradually disappear—half-blood, quadroon, octoroon, and finally white. The boarding school was the first station of homogenization for the Australian Aboriginal.[68]

The legal power of the government over the life of indigenous peoples was more expansive in Australia than in the United States. This difference asserted itself at the point of white-indigenous contact in the colonial period. In the United States the Constitution acknowledged the sovereignty of indigenous peoples (even though they did not frequently respect it) and negotiated treaties which codified the government-to-government nature of relations.[69] In Australia the first colonizers invoked the British legal concept of *terra nullius* that permanently subverted the relationships between the State governments and indigenous peoples. The legal status of indigenous peoples had a significant influence on the historical development of boarding schools. In the United States parents were strongly encouraged to relinquish their children to the care of various types of boarding schools and were threatened with loss of rations and/or a reduction in annuities for non-compliance. However, parents could successfully resist government efforts and always enjoyed the company of their children during extended breaks from school. In Australia indigenous boarding schools were populated by children who were forcibly removed under the authority of law for the purpose of initiating racial purification and blending them into "white Australia." This difference has prompted critics to assign different labels to the

68. See Gary Foley, "Assimilating the Natives in the United States and Australia," 2000, www.koori-web.org/foley/essays/essay_15.html

69. It is argued by some scholars that U.S. policy-makers believed that "the United States Government [through the Louisiana Purchase] acquired all rights to sovereignty [of Indian lands]. The position of international law dealing with the acquisition of territory had little to say about the rights of indigenous inhabitants of such territory; only governments, not individuals, had legal standing in this system of jurisprudence. Indian tribes were not, therefore, considered to be 'nation-states' so far as territorial rights were concerned; until 1871, however, they were vested with a facsimile of such status for the purpose of treaty-making." Robert Munkres, "Indian-White Contact Before 1870: Cultural Factors in Conflict," *Journal of the West* X, no. 3 (July 1971): 449. The sovereignty of Indian nations was addressed in a number of United States Supreme Court cases in the 1830s, especially *Cherokee Nation* v. *State of Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester* v. *State of Georgia* (1832). The issue of land ownership and transfer of title was adjudicated in *Johnson* v. *McIntosh* (1823) which ruled that "superior title is held by a discoverer of land or his successor, namely the United States federal government."

"boarding school era"—cultural destruction in the United States and genocide in Australia. These indictments reflect government policies towards indigenous education which were shaped by the legal status of the indigenous peoples.

Despite the glaring polarities in racial attitudes and legal status of indigenous peoples, the United States and Australia shared a good deal of common ground regarding education and schools for their indigenous populations. Both countries developed indigenous policies and educational institutions based on prevailing notions of assimilation. In 1900 government officials, humanitarians, missionaries, and scholars all assumed that native culture was moving towards extinction and that the best hopes of the rising generation was assimilation into white society. In both cases government bureaucrats and boarding school administrators believed that "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons or groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life"[70] should be the guiding objective of education and indigenous policy. The theory of assimilation was prominent in the United States and Australia because of prevailing notions of cultural/racial superiority, increasing fear of foreigners (xenophobia), demonizing fallacies of miscegenation, mounting ethnocentrism, and growing pressure for national homogenization. In short, historic and demographic pressures around 1900 coalesced to shape the policies of objectives of indigenous education.

The relationship between religion and the state have always been strained in the United States and Australia. Some argue that the dynamic tension between these two institutions have generated a symbiotic relationship that protect the rights and prerogatives of both institutions. Despite these tensions Christianity has made a significant contribution to national identity and culture in both the United States and Australia. This explains, in part, why both nations supported and encouraged the involvement of Christian denominations in indigenous education. The trinity of "Christianity, civilization, and cultivation" served the objectives of assimilation policy and created structures for evangelization and conversion. The school became the pulverizing force for forging indigenous children into productive and literate pursuits that characterized the Christian people in the United States and Australia. While lofty humanitarian goals and an available workforce were practical reasons for using churches to educate indigenous children, the common worldview and goals of church and state was more important in solidifying the relationship.

"The Smell of the White Man Is Killing Us" may be somewhat misleading and inaccurate since between 1900 and 1950 the indigenous population increased, cultural identity persisted, and indigenous nationalism emerged. All of the these developments contradict the long-held views of experts on indigenous affairs in the United States and Australia and prove that indigenous boarding schools did not realize the

70. Russell Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1995): 444.

objectives for which they were founded. In fact, it is now becoming clear that many of the indigenous nationalists and tribal leaders formed close alliances in boarding schools and secured sufficient knowledge in those institutions to challenge racist attitudes and unjust government policies. In both countries the boarding school graduates form the vanguard of indigenous rights movements and serve as leaders of their communities—a far cry from the desired outcome in 1900 or even 1950.